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AUTHOR Cohen, Audrey C.
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ABSTRACT

We are becoming a service based society. Changes in our society all point to the move to a service based society which demands a new educational approach. In such a society human service professionals will be consumer-oriented, cooperators with the citizen, and judged by the citizens and consumers they serve. These workers will serve, advocate for and help the whole person. They will be able to cross institutional lines, areas of specialization, and disciplines. They will achieve these goals through a new learning paradigm (the eight "crystals" and the five "dimensions") and a new assessment tool (the "constructive action"). The eight crystals of ability are: self-assessment and preparation for practice, developing professional relationships with citizens and co-workers, working with others in groups, teaching and communicating, counseling, serving as community liaison, supervising co-workers, and managing change. The five dimensions of performance are purpose, values, self and others, systems, and skills. With the new assessment tool, the constructive action, students synthesize their classroom study and their field experience on a significant effort to improve service. The document includes charts outlining the crystals, performance dimensions, constructive actions and blending theory and practice. (JB)

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THE SERVICE SOCIETY

AND A THEORY OF LEARNING LINKING EDUCATION • WORK • LIFE

Audrey C. Cohen

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THE COLLEGE FOR HUMAN SERVICES

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THE COLLEGE FOR HUMAN SERVICES

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Revised edition.
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The College for Human Services
345 Hudson Street, New York, N.Y. 10014

Introduction

The students who started their classes at the College for Human Services in 1974 were the first to be admitted in many months. The College was emerging from a major curriculum redesign project that had involved a large part of the College's professional staff and an array of consultants for four long years. During much of that time, our ordinary operations were suspended. When we reopened our doors, we were inaugurating a brand new educational model. This model provided the guidelines for a transdisciplinary, practice-oriented curriculum, a curriculum organized to help students apply theory from the liberal arts and professional studies to the solution of real human problems in human service positions in business and the not-for-profit world. Now we faced a new challenge—helping the faculty take hold of this new educational model and use it to full advantage for the benefit of students. The model was an ideal. The reality of a lively, challenging, evolving curriculum incorporating persuasive new methods of teaching was yet to come.

In 1976, when I delivered a paper entitled *The Service Society and a Theory of Learning That Relates Education, Work, and Life* at a symposium at Pennsylvania State University, we had had several years of experience in using our new educational model as a guide to curriculum planning and teaching. We had worked out a methodology for bringing together teams of faculty members reflecting a variety of disciplines and a broad range of human service experience. This faculty had responsibility for a total education that included not only the academic component but also the field internships that all students attended for part of each week. In preparation for each semester, faculty members put their heads together to plan an integrated program of classes and field experience for their students.

Visitors who came to the College during those early years were always especially impressed with the ability of our faculty of scholar-practitioners to work together to produce a curriculum that blended all their best thinking. It was a curriculum, moreover, that directly addressed the needs, questions, and concerns of students who were daily confronting real human service problems. Our faculty, in their unusual ability to work in a collaborative relationship to meet the needs of students, pioneered as role models for the versatile new professionals we wanted our students to be. With their help, our new curriculum design was being transformed into a complete new educational system, including new ways of planning and new ways of teaching, as well as a new way of organizing the liberal arts curriculum.

The organization of our educational model and our way of using it to develop transdisciplinary curricula were described for the first time to

people outside the College in a series of charts which were part of the published version of *The Service Society.* The charts in the Appendix of this new edition have been edited to be more self explanatory and to bring the curriculum content up to date. In view of the importance of this paper and its accompanying charts in the development of the College for Human Services educational system, I think this Introduction is an appropriate place to give a brief account of how our new educational system evolved.

THE CURRICULUM REDESIGN PROJECT

For all of my adult life, I have struggled with one educational challenge that seems to me more important than any other: How do we help students make the connection between the great bodies of theory they learn in school and the world of choice and action where these theories will be tested? How can we help them discover the relevance of philosophy, history, literature, and science to the real problems they face at home, in the community, and in the workplace? When I founded the College for Human Services in 1964 (it began as the Women's Talent Corps, changing its name to the College for Human Services in 1967 [1]) I was able to try out some of my ideas for blending theory and practice.

It was for me a given that when students undertook their education they should simultaneously be engaged in meaningful work in the real world, so that academic study and solid work experience were inseparable elements of their education. At this early stage in my thinking, I felt that a necessary step in creating a sound educational experience for our students was the development of a core curriculum organized to give meaning to the essential bodies of theory and to emphasize their relation to our students' lives and their work experience. The Talent Corps enrolled talented adults from low-income communities whose intelligence, motivation, and life experience indicated a potential for human service work. These groundbreaking students spent two days of each week in classes and three days in real human service positions in the field. Classroom faculty went into the field with their students to help them identify the areas where they could be most useful and to encourage them to make use of theory from the classroom to solve the problems they found in the field. By 1970, graduates of our core program were earning the Associate in Arts degree.

One measure of the need for our program was our success in persuading the agencies we worked with—agencies as varied as public schools, legal service agencies, hospitals, and settlement houses—to create completely new preprofessional job categories and to help the College train students to fill them. Many new positions which we created at that time are

1. The U.S. Patent Office recognized that the College had introduced the term *human services* as far back as 1967 when it registered our name as a trademark.

now firmly established in human service organizations, including paralegal, education assistant, guidance assistant, and social work assistant. We at the College for Human Services actually wrote the job descriptions for the dozen new positions we created. This was an enormously useful experience for educators.

It was not only our students who benefited from an education that blended theory and practice. The employers who provided them with internships recognized that our students had an extraordinary ability to get to the heart of complex human situations and figure out how to achieve a significant change. Often we were told that our A.A. degree students were performing at the level of masters degree students from other institutions. We viewed the positions our students were creating in these agencies as the first step on a continuum of education and work experience that would produce a new kind of professional, a professional able to blend theory and practice for a significant improvement in service.

In developing these new preprofessional positions and helping our students prepare for them, we at the College for Human Services discovered that the most important areas of knowledge and skill run right across the various specialized areas of service. For example, all human service professionals must understand themselves and others from the biological, psychological, and cultural perspectives. All must know how to work with people in groups. In short, we were finding that the wide variety of different kinds of work our students would be doing did not require a dozen specialized degree programs. The most important abilities that service professionals require seemed to be generic to all service positions.

We have since learned that the kinds of abilities we were identifying are the common requisite of service positions in business as well as the traditional helping professions.

With this evidence of the underlying unity of service occupations, I began to believe that it was possible to design an educational program that went much further in blending theory and practice than the College's original core program. To do this, it would be necessary to identify the most important generic abilities that run through the professions and give them an organization that was powerful enough to support a college curriculum. How many different kinds of abilities were there? How could they be organized for the greatest educational effectiveness? It became clear to me that the thorough integration of academic theory and living practice that I had in mind could only be accomplished through a radical redesign of the educational process, and this would require a long and costly process of research and development.

At first, I did not suppose that it was up to the College for Human Services to undertake this awesome task. It seemed to me that we had played our pioneering role by creating a new path into higher education and the professions. We had recruited a new and hitherto neglected population of students— talented, concerned men and women from low-income neighborhoods. We had given them a strong foundation of theory and practice, enabling them to bring their rich store of experience to the educational process and literally make a leap forward to become forceful, thoughtful, informed practitioners. They left the College with an Associate in Arts degree. Now it was up to the traditional colleges and the professions to provide the programs that would allow these outstanding students to achieve full professional status.

I approached four-year colleges such as New York University and Columbia to see if they would help to fill the gap between our A.A. degree program and traditional professional education at the graduate level by offering programs of theory and practice at the baccalaureate level. I hoped that professional associations such as the National Association of Social Workers and the American Bar Association would recognize graduates from the new kind of undergraduate program we had developed and provide professional certification for well-prepared practitioners with the associate and baccalaureate degrees. This was not to be. Four-year colleges were not interested in undergraduate programs that blended theory and practice. The social work profession, to take one example, was not only unwilling to consider certifying any person with less than a masters degree; it actively opposed efforts by the College to gain accreditation for professional training at the undergraduate level.[2] In the final analysis, the College for Human Services had no choice. Unless we developed a full continuum of baccalaureate and masters degree programs ourselves, the population we served—including fine practitioners who had already proved their excellence in the field—were at a dead end.

2. It is interesting to note that once the College for Human Services had opened the position of Social Work Assistant, the social work profession decided to support undergraduate social work training. It was not long before major colleges introduced baccalaureate programs in social work, and we have since seen the development of baccalaureate programs in other areas such as law. The social work profession went so far as to coopt the term *human services*. Unfortunately, they did not adopt the term with its true meaning of a generic profession whose practitioners are able to apply broad knowledge and skills across the spectrum of for-profit and non-profit helping services. Unfortunately, the colleges did not develop rich transdisciplinary programs strongly based in the liberal arts to prepare practitioners who were educated and not simply trained. The new undergraduate programs are as narrow and specialized as professional programs at the graduate level, preparing people to operate in narrowly defined, jealously protected areas of practice.

In the early 1970's, the College received a significant grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Secondary Education, sponsored by the United States Department of Education. This, together with grants we had previously received from other sources,[3] made it possible for the College to undertake the project I had dreamed of. The College was able to transform itself into a thinktank. For a period of three years, we focused our efforts on a total redesign of the educational process. A core group of educators at the College were constituted as a planning team. They worked with a distinguished group of consultants which included scholars representing a variety of disciplines, representatives of human service organizations, curriculum experts, and researchers. Our aim was to build an educational program around the requirements of effective performance, a program that organized human knowledge around the actions professionals take and the kinds of choices they must make.

It was essential, of course, that we work with people who represented excellent examples of the kind of professional our new program was intended to prepare. These people would have to be distinguished for the quality of service they provided—their ability to make a difference in people's lives. In addition, they would embody the ability to make a wise and deliberate use of theory in their practice. Through its working relationship with human service organizations throughout the city, the College identified sixty such professionals. A prominent research firm, McBer and Company of Cambridge, Mass., was retained to interview these professionals and analyze the results.

Our most important source of knowledge and inspiration, however, was our own experience of working with students and seeing at first hand what went into the making of capable, caring service practitioners.

BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR THE DESIGN OF A NEW SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Our first task, then, was to define the abilities and characteristics of effective professionals. In effect, this would provide us with a description of the kind of professional we wanted to graduate and a summary of what our students must learn to become this kind of professional. This description could then serve as the basis for reorganizing the traditional bodies of knowledge on which undergraduate education is built. The social sciences, the humanities, and professional topics would be brought together in new ways to help

3. Our work made use of grants from the Field Foundation, International Business Machines, and the New York Foundation as well as the George Champion Award from Chase Manhattan Bank.

students develop the ability to make the kinds of choices and take the kinds of actions that could be expected of outstanding professionals.

A Focus On Purpose

Members of the planning team called attention to two qualities that they felt were conspicuous above all others among our best students and among professionals whom their colleagues recognized as outstanding. First, these effective people, from the most powerful to the humblest, be they heads of statewide agencies or community volunteers, doctors, lawyers, or teacher assistants in their local school, were *purposeful.* They always knew exactly where they were going. They were change makers. They were convinced of their ability to make the world a better place. They always had a goal, they worked in creative ways to achieve their goal, and once they decided what they wanted to do, nothing would deter them. We realized that this sense of purpose was a quality that must be encouraged and supported in our students. We must instill them with the courage, the conviction, and the skills needed to work for change. We must teach them always to focus their work on a worthwhile purpose.

The purpose of Human Service is to empower people—to help people get better control over their lives. Too many professionals go through the motions of providing service, following the customary procedures without any conviction that they are going to effect a real change in people's lives. Too many professionals see service as a kind of holding operation, a way to keep people going without helping them get anywhere. Our students would be expected to approach their work with a determination to make a difference. In each situation, they must decide with the citizen what the real purpose of the service is. Guided by purpose, they would test and explore as needed to find the methods that worked.

An Awareness of Values and Ethical Issues

A constant awareness of values and ethical issues seemed to go hand in hand with the focus on purpose in the professionals we most admired. They were always aware of what they thought was good and bad and right and wrong, and how and why their values and ethical choices differed from those of other people. This is perhaps not surprising, but it certainly is a matter of significance to educators. One's purpose is always guided by values. The methods one chooses to achieve one's purpose also reflect one's values. Too often, we act as if our purposes are self-evident and our methods come from some value-free realm of technical competence. Obviously this is not true. The world is full of high achievers, but only occasionally do we

see people who successfully carry out endeavors that are of real benefit to other human beings. Such people have grounded their choice of a purpose and their strategies in their strong sense of values and committed ethical stance. Clearly, a sense of purpose does not in itself result in appropriate choices. Purpose and values must go hand in hand. We must educate students to understand ethical systems and their implications, to reflect on their values, and to make choices with a strong sense of their values. They must be sensitive to the values of others and able to maintain their values while working productively with people who disagree with them.

Attention to these two concepts, *purpose* and *values*, could, some of us were convinced, make a difference in education. Such traditional subjects as philosophy and literature would take on new life if they were taught with the specific aim of helping students examine their values and make strong choices about the purposes they will pursue. Over the course of several years, in sessions that were variously impassioned, frustrating, deliberative, and exhilarating, our planning team developed a list of twelve to fifteen characteristics and abilities that we wanted our student professionals to develop. *Purposefulness* and *awareness of values* always headed the list.

As we examined the characteristics and abilities that our education would focus on, we also thought about how we could structure this education so that the connection between theory and practice was absolutely built in. Although I was convinced that the new education we were envisioning would be radically different from traditional education, involving a shift in *all* the major components of the educational process, I also felt that it would have a natural logic and harmony. Despite its complexity, despite the degree of organization that was needed to relate theory and practice, this new kind of education would make sense—far more sense than the piecemeal education we have become accustomed to.

During the period when we were trying to map out the shift in the traditional structures of education, some of us found it useful to describe our ideas in images. Two images that were especially potent for me were finally embodied in our new system of education and have become a part of our language: *Crystals,* and *Constructive Actions.*

Crystals of Learning

Imagine a learning process which enables students to immerse themselves totally for a given time in a particular area of learning and action. I pictured a learning environment like a bubble, or a marvelously equipped space capsule, where students could be surrounded by all the relevant resources from every discipline and profession, and could concentrate on

bringing together the relevant aspects of this knowledge and the living experience of work outside in an actual community. Students would stay in one bubble long enough to integrate the theoretical learning and experience it offered, and then they would leave that bubble and enter a new one, where they would again immerse themselves in a total, concentrated learning experience.

A crystal was an even better image for the truly transforming learning experience I wanted students to have. A mineral crystal has unique properties. It shows us different aspects of the world around us, depending on how it is turned. It brings together differing views of the world and lets us see how they relate to each other. It breaks apart the light that comes into it, displaying it in colorful array, and then fuses it once more. And, like a living thing, a crystal grows in all directions.

A crystal seemed to reflect my idea of an education which provides people with a total learning experience. It suggested an educational design that would enable students to concentrate on a particular area of their work, to examine it from the perspective of many disciplines, to look deeply into the appropriate sources of knowledge, and finally to restore the wholeness of this dispersed knowledge, bringing it together in one clear focused image to inform their actions.

For one period of time, students could concentrate all their attention on one major real-life purpose—working in groups, for example. They would enter a *Crystal of learning and practice* and find themselves in a multifaceted educational process in which everything they learned was related to working in groups. All of their studies and their field experience would help them to arrive at a clearer view of their individual purpose as a group member and leader, and how to achieve it. They would look at group participation in all its aspects. They would draw on the ideas of a multitude of great thinkers and see what light these thinkers cast on their own efforts to improve people's lives through work in groups.

It was a beautiful idea. The question was, what force would bring about the crystallizing process.

Integration Through Constructive Actions

Throughout this protracted planning effort, I had been searching for a device that would encourage students to blend theory and practice by requiring them to structure their learning and to assess it in a way that kept both theory and practice in view. The kernel for the solution—the idea of the *Constructive Action*—was generated out of an experience I had as a member

of the Newman Task Force on Higher Education.

After a dinner meeting in San Diego, I was returning to the hotel by car with several other members of the Commission. We passed the Coronado Bridge and were struck by its many impressive qualities—it was at once beautiful to look at, practical, solidly designed, and respectful of its environment. The designer of this bridge had brought together theory from many specialized areas of study to produce a result that benefits people on many levels, practical and esthetic. One of our members suggested that the bridge could in itself serve as sufficient demonstration that its engineer was entitled to the Ph.D. I saw in this bridge the embodiment of the idea that an educated person is one who knows how to use theory for the benefit of other human beings.

The image of the bridge remained in my memory; it suggested to me that the measure of a competent and creative person was exactly this ability to bring together many kinds of knowledge and fuse it in work that is practical, efficient, respectful of human concerns, and esthetically pleasing. I felt that we must begin to conceptualize work in the social sciences in a similar fashion. Human service should call on a wide range of theory. It should be soundly conceived. In its planning it should show respect for the person served. But it must also be responsive to the needs of the service provider and the concerns of the community and the larger society. Work that succeeds in addressing these many concerns is the true measure of professional competence. It makes sense that professional education should award degrees to practitioners who can use theory in creative ways to be of real benefit to people.

The lesson of the bridge had enormous implications for me in terms of higher education. It helped me conceptualize a teaching methodology, the *Constructive Action,* which directs students in the blending of theory and practice. The Constructive Action proved to be the crystallizing force that we had been looking for. It would be in Constructive Actions, service projects performed in the field, that students would bring together theory from many disciplines and focus it on practice.

BREAKTHROUGH

As our planning progressed, our team of planners expanded the list of the abilities and characteristics we wanted our students to acquire. We saw each one as a significant focal point for learning. We detailed the kinds of tasks they encompassed, the skills they demanded, the kinds of educational experiences they suggested. We explored the bodies of knowledge that would

support and invigorate them. But we still had not made the leap from this array of professional characteristics to a structured program grounded in purpose and values and structured around Crystals and Constructive Actions. We were running out of time.

The breakthrough came at a meeting which I attended with a firm resolve that the time had come to find a new underlying structure in our list of professional characteristics. We looked at each item on the list, asking ourselves which ones could serve as the basis for self-contained curriculum units. We set these aside as list A. All the items on this list represented discrete performance areas that students might concentrate on and master one by one. We envisioned students moving through a concentration on *building professional relationships, working in groups, teaching, counseling,* and so forth. These essential performance areas, we realized, could be the focus of *Crystals of learning and practice,* in which all of a student's studies would be related to aspects of these critical areas, and the student's field experience would be directed to actual practice in the focal area.

Looking at the items that had been removed from list A, we now saw a unifying element that had not been clear when there was only one list of performance areas. The items on list B seemed to represent aspects of performance that should always be present, no matter what area of work the student was focusing on. Principal among these aspects of performance were, of course, a *sense of purpose* and a *concern for values.* These were followed by an *understanding of self and others,* an *understanding of systems and institutions* that affect one's work, and the mastery of appropriate *skills.*

This was for me a thrilling moment. The items on list B were the indispensable *Dimensions* of professional performance. They were the threads or elements that wove their way through the action process as qualities, knowledge, emotions, etc. The Dimensions provide the structure for each Crystal. Together, the Crystals and the Dimensions delineate a total many-faceted education. This was the breakthrough I had been waiting for. I knew we had the outlines of a design that would make it possible to reorganize education so that the purpose of the learning is at the center, where it belongs, and theory is organized around that purpose. My great goal of reorganizing education was within reach.

Once we had reached this point, the elements of the program fell into place quite quickly. Culling and combining, we identified eight essential Crystals of learning. To each we assigned a full semester of the undergraduate program. In each, be it *counseling, supervision,* or *community liaison,* students would be concerned with five Dimensions of their performance. They and

their instructors would look at the student's ability to select appropriate purposes and supporting strategies, their attention to value issues, their understanding of self and others in the context of this Crystal, their understanding of systems, and their mastery of needed skills.

Now it occurred to me all at once that the Dimensions provided the final missing element in my effort to restructure education. *We would teach to the Dimensions.* They would provide the focus for our classes, replacing the traditional disciplines as the principle for organizing knowledge. They would enable us to reach our goal of organizing theory around the requirements of performance. Specifically, in each consecutive Crystal, classes would be organized around the Dimensions, with each instructor taking responsibility for one Dimension. Instead of teaching an isolated course in ethics, for example, the *Values* instructor might draw on topics in history and philosophy and a wide range of examples from law and literature to make students aware of the kinds of value issues they were facing and the ethical implications and possible human consequences of various choices they might make.

The key Dimension continued to be the Purpose Dimension, for all of the student's work would be focused on purpose. It now became clear how this would be done. In every Crystal, students would concentrate on the purpose identified with that Crystal—which might be *teaching,* for instance, or *working in groups,* or *managing change.* Each purpose delineates a particular component of effective service, one indispensable aspect of professional competence. *Teaching,* for example, is a key area of professional life. To be an effective teacher, the professional must have a demonstrated ability to promote learning by expounding, explaining, guiding, demonstrating.

The purpose of the Crystal would be embodied in a Constructive Action that each student would carry out in a business or agency placement. In each Crystal, students would learn how to plan a Constructive Action for that Crystal in their Purpose class. In planning it, they would draw on all of their Dimension classes. As they carried out the Constructive Action, their Purpose instructor would consult with them, read logs of their work, and observe their performance in the field. Throughout the process, students would write extensively, recording their interactions with others, their planning and decision making, their reflections on significant events, their evaluation of progress. The students and their instructor would look at the five Dimensions of their performance. Student achievement would be assessed on the basis of their ability to make use of what they had learned

in their Dimension classes to provide excellent service at their field placement through the Constructive Action.

CONFIRMATION FROM RESEARCH

Shortly after the breakthrough planning session that resulted in the definition of the Crystals and the Dimensions, we received a report from McBer and Company on the results of their interviews of sixty selected professionals. This report listed the qualities and abilities of these outstanding professionals. The report confirmed much of what we ourselves had observed about the characteristics of excellent professional practice. One finding, however, stood in startling contrast to our own conclusions. The report noted that one of the greatest problems these outstanding professionals faced was lack of a sense of progress. No matter how much help they gave, there were always more people in need of help, and from year to year it seemed as though nothing really changed. They could never look back and say there was any one thing that they accomplished this year that was different from last year. Based on this finding, our consultants recommended that we select applicants with a high tolerance for work that didn't seem to go anywhere.

Here was a contradiction. We had decided that Purpose with a capital P was going to be the cornerstone of our new human service program. Now our consultants were telling us that Human Service was a profession for people who were content to do their best from day to day and didn't have too highly developed a sense of purpose. This finding of our consultants underlined for us the importance of teaching students that they could make a difference. In our program, we give our students the opportunity to work for change while they are still in school and have the support of their instructors. When they perform their Constructive Action in each Crystal, they are learning to take chances. They are learning that if one strategy doesn't work, it's better to try another strategy than to keep on making the same mistakes. With the help of a program focused on purpose, they are learning that they can make a difference.

TRANSLATING THE PLAN INTO ACTION

The charts in the Appendix to this publication outline the structure of our new educational system. They also show how our faculty makes use of this system to plan an integrated curriculum for each semester. Our faculty members bring to the planning effort widely differing backgrounds in the traditional disciplines and a varied experience of service in government, business, education, and the helping professions. Every semester, they meet

in teams to prepare a vibrant curriculum for the various Crystals. This continuing innovation within a tightly organized model is possible because our model serves as a heuristic, inviting faculty to explore their special areas of knowledge and experience in relation to the requirements for Constructive Action in the real world. Over time, we have managed to reorganize the traditional social sciences and humanities in exciting new ways.

MAKING UP FOR LOST TIME

The educational model developed by the College for Human Services has been tested in practice for over fifteen years. It has been used to guide curriculum development, teaching, and assessment. It guided the development of a business program that for six years has offered students a curriculum that integrates the business disciplines and the liberal arts around the Dimensions of practice. It has guided the development of a new kind of masters program. This represents substantial progress for the educational ideas that we started with. Now we are bringing our new kind of education to elementary and secondary schools. Today, while colleges remain wedded to their traditional models, there is a growing consensus that our schools are in crisis and can only be saved through new and better educational approaches.

The new system of education we have designed at the College for Human Services was designed specifically for the new age of service that all of us now live in. The service age is an age of tremendous promise—the promise of a society based on concern for others, the promise of a world which values service to others above all other activities and occupations. But even though we live in a society where 80% of the working population is engaged in service occupations, we have not yet accepted the challenge of the service age. We do not, as a society, recognize the value of excellent service nor have we, by and large, adopted an ethic of service. We have not redesigned our institutions to relate them to the new world of service. We have seen a tremendous growth in service industries. But at the same time we have watched people who should be leaders and role models in these service industries engaged in lying, manipulating their customers, bilking the public. We have seen the development of a vast infrastructure of public and private services—education, health care, care for the aged, the troubled, the poor. But we have seen these systems founder despite the tremendous sums invested in them. We have seen our schools fail too many of our children, health care systems that give poor people short shrift, systems for people in need that are totally inadequate to the dimensions of the need.

The tremendous cutbacks affecting our infrastructure, the spirit of distrust toward people in need, the touting of greed as the source of national economic health, all these are products of the Reagan years. We cannot let this wasting of the promise of the service age continue. I am convinced that a new age must come, an age when we finally accept a service ethos and allow it to transform our relations with each other. When this age comes, the new kind of education that has been developed at the College for Human Services will come into its own. The new kind of education we are introducing at the elementary and secondary level will help our young people become the new kinds of citizens this new age calls for and makes possible.

In Appreciation

I want to mention here some of those who played important roles in the developmental process I have described. Key staff members involved in the planning process were Stephen C. Sunderland, Laura P. Houston, Ruth Messinger, Janith Jordan, Deborah Allen, Barbara Walton, Kathryn Hoffman, Donald Hazen, Sydelle Bloom and Eileen Blum. Alida Mesrop made a major contribution in the original preparation of *The Service Society.* Janith Jordan and Deborah Allen prepared the original version of the charts in the Appendix to *The Service Society.* Deborah Allen revised the charts for this new edition and assisted with the Introduction and the revision of the text. Shirley Conyard and Humphrey Crookendale gave special help in bringing the new charts up to date. Many faculty members over the years have contributed to the continuing development of our educational model.

Audrey C. Cohen
September, 1988

THE SERVICE SOCIETY
AND A THEORY OF LEARNING LINKING EDUCATION • WORK • LIFE

A growing portion of the work force is finding employment not in industry, but in service fields and, increasingly, in human service occupations. Proportionately, making a product is on the decrease as an occupation.[1]

This shift in the job market has been one of the best kept secrets of our capitalist society. Our leaders still emphasize industrial capacity and acceleration of the Gross National Product. Continued refusal to recognize and deal with this major shift in the job market, however, means hiding from the facts. It means assuming that things will continue as they were. This assumption is wrong.

WE ARE BECOMING A SERVICE SOCIETY

. . . and we are not prepared for this change. Neither education nor work as presently structured is easing this transition for us.

Today's education reflects past priorities. What we need now—and what we do not have—is a reorganization of learning which will support a move toward service and service employment. We need a new paradigm for blending theory and practice; a new way to develop skills in working with people; a new way to train people to solve human problems. In short, we need an education that continues to be relevant in a rapidly changing world, an education that prepares people to provide more and better services to each other.

These are not new needs. They have been raised in the past and have often polarized educational opinion. They are part of the continuing debate over the need or non-need for vocational education . . . the need or non-need for experiential programs . . . the validity or non-validity of the liberal arts approach, etc. But the time for argument is past. Education for the service society must take what is useful from the social sciences, the liberal arts, professional studies, and experiential education and build an entirely new model that is oriented towards service—an educational model that will help each individual to work constructively, whether in the service sector or in service activities in the production sector, to improve the quality of life in our changing society.

There is great variety in service occupations. Service may mean customer service in banking and retailing, or it may mean personnel services, health care, care for the young and the aged. These differences in kinds of service are less important than the awareness that there are themes, or dimensions, that cut across all effective work with people—all service areas. It is essential to establish the connection between these themes that recur

in service occupations and the education that prepares people for service. Once the themes have been defined, we must see that they permeate education so that professional theory, the liberal arts, technical skills, and field experience all relate to the common themes of service. We must see that these themes are reflected in an entire educational system supportive of the service ethos.

The College for Human Services has carried out a lengthy research project to help us identify the themes that are common to effective service. We found that these themes can be categorized in five broad, interrelated areas which we call Dimensions. The move to a service society has created fundamental shifts in all five of these Dimensions: in our purposes, our values, our understanding of self and others, our understanding of the systems that affect our lives, and the skills we need to be useful and productive.

These five Dimensions provide a natural conceptual framework for a revitalized educational system. They can help us create a system that is directly tied to effective, satisfying labor in the service society. As an illustration, let me use these five Dimensions to analyze why and how we are moving to become a service society.

THE DIMENSIONS OF A MAJOR CHANGE

1. The Shift in Purpose

The emphasis on service and the increase in service-related jobs represent a direct response to new national goals. Better health care for all citizens, more effective schooling, lasting rehabilitation of drug users, a decent life for the aging—these are some of the national priorities which we see reflected also in legislative support of women's rights, legislative demands on business for social responsibility, concern about the horrendous conditions in many agencies established to care for people and legislative attempts to set standards for their operation, and the vast changes taking place in our national health care system. Title XX of the Social Security Act, for example, now provides that a certain segment of social security funds be set aside and allocated on a per capita basis to states to provide needed services to people, from children to the elderly. These new priorities translate into employment opportunities within the service sector and thus contribute to changing work patterns and ethics. They also support the growing belief in the accountability of workers.

The goal of better service for all has been furthered by:

2. The Shift in Values

One of the ideas, or values, underlying our American culture has been at least an intellectual belief in egalitarianism and continuing

progress toward an increasingly just and humane society. The ability, for example, of this country's vast numbers of poor immigrants—many of them non-English-speaking and some of them illiterate—to achieve education and economic security for themselves, or at least to help their children secure them, is a case in point. Another example is the effort to make life more rewarding for the disabled. In many ways, America has been an open society in spite of retrogressive periods and shameful incidents of significant proportions. Now we are making another giant move forward. The industrial era which is now slipping behind us focused on goods. The service era we have recently entered focuses on the idealization and value of human beings.[2] This change of focus in our economy and in our society as a whole can provide us with perhaps the greatest impetus we have had since the American revolution toward actual realization of our egalitarian ideals. If work and rewards are restructured around this new respect for people, it may truly offer the possibility of a more equal society.[3]

(New values are also apparent in recent population shifts. There was a time not long ago when every person's dream seemed to focus on life in the city. Now we are seeing rebellion against the impersonality of that life and a move toward slower paced, less populated areas and life styles where individual qualities can flourish and be appreciated.)

3. The Shift In Our Understanding of Self and Others

We are seeing vast changes in the roles men and women are expected to play. New understandings of ourselves and our needs point to the expectation of playing many different roles within a lifetime and often sharing these roles with others. The old, stereotyped roles—the domineering male, the submissive female—have been challenged and these challenges have been supported in new legislation and in court cases. There is a new appreciation of the wide variety of social behavior in non-human species, and the possibilities for choice in humans. People are no longer acquiescing in stereotypes of the past. They have a new confidence in their ability to manage their own lives and, if necessary, to break new ground. People expect to go back to school, to learn new skills and redirect their careers as they progress through life. People want to know more about how they function, or what makes them function in certain ways, so they can direct their own lives. They are interested in genes and gene therapy, in the role of nutrition in major diseases, in the complexity of the brain and its regenerative power.

4. The Shift In Systems And How We Look At Them

These changes in goals, in values, and in how we perceive ourselves and others are related to changes in the institutions of society and the way we look at them.

Only recently we were a nation of limitless resources and seemingly unbounded riches. Today, however, faced with ecological choices, the dependence on such nonrenewable resources as coal and oil, and the escalating costs of utilities, for example, we have become aware that our resources are limited, that we must be prudent in their use and seek to conserve them. We now look to government systems and business systems to foresee the ecological impact of their decisions and to protect and preserve resources rather than exploit and expand their use. Awareness of this need to conserve is new to us, but it is already having an impact on the kind of life we want to lead and the kind of society which is supportable.

We are faced with significant demographic changes. Our birthrate is shrinking. Elementary school enrollments are down. Our population is becoming increasingly older. To adjust to these developments, systems must be changed and directed towards meeting the needs of a substantially older population. Many of these needs fall into the area of service.

Consumerism is part of the new awareness that present systems are autocratic and arbitrary and support a depersonalization of work. Focused until now almost totally on the industrial sector, consumerism has exposed incident after incident of dangerous corporate and/or personal incompetence and workmanship, leading to pressure for higher standards in manufacturing and for corporate accountability. It has also begun to result in more autonomy for workers, employee upgrading through industry-sponsored courses aimed at heightening job satisfaction through perfecting certain skills or acquiring new ones and, in rare instances, in the actual redesign of jobs to promote greater worker satisfaction.[4]

Consumerism is beginning to extend to services. Witness the concern with American medical practices which we read about in our newspapers. We now often consciously question the high costs of our health care and confront physicians, dentists, and health specialists with our doubts. Television shows and movies like "Hospital" are contributing to the consumer movement and the impetus for changes to make our systems more responsive to our needs and more responsible in their operations. Such concerns blend quite naturally with the growing service sector. They help underscore the mediocrity of the so-called "meritocratic" systems - such as civil service, teacher tenure, and medical school admissions—which have such a strong say as to who is qualified to provide services. There is a growing perception that performance is the real indicator of competence. Despite powerful union opposition, we have a better opportunity today than ever before to develop new assessment and credentialing instruments which reflect and reward competence in support of the new service ethos.

Even technology has influenced our move to service. As technology begins to eliminate the drudgery of so much of our work, there is the

expectation of more satisfying labor. Helping others to grow, learning to handle interpersonal problems—these have always been sources of satisfaction. Technology has given many the hope of engaging in the kinds of activities that translate themselves into service-oriented jobs.

This move toward service and the emerging themes which characterize the new approach to service have changed our perception of business. Those captains of industry who used to be respected and admired are increasingly being criticized for their unethical behavior in the pursuit of profits. Closer government scrutiny and enforcement of ethical standards are demanded. What the business sector does, and perhaps has done for many years, is in diametric opposition to our new values. Revelations that major corporations have delivered millions to politicians and bureaucrats in return for favorable business treatment, and the revulsion at the antics of certain companies, exemplify the paucity of business ethics and the growing inclination of citizens to challenge them. It is the dozens of incidents like these that will encourage employees to recast working situations and bring the values of industry into closer harmony with the values of a service society.

Within the industrial sector, there will be an infusion of the service ethos, for service will increasingly be a part even of that sector concerned with production. The wave of the future will see business responding to the new emphasis on the quality of life and organizing to deliver services to their workers as well as to their customers in ways that are more in harmony with our new values.

To move from a society that has focused on industrial production to one that supports the delivery of outstanding service is a giant step. Since, ideally, service to other human beings allows citizens to make significant contributions both to other people's well-being and to their own sense of worth, the materialistic self-interest and personal economic gain which are among the hallmarks of our capitalistic society are becoming inappropriate as primary motivating factors for work in the service society.

A changing population, an interest in conservation, consumerism, a desire for more rewarding work—these among other factors require a change in existing systems which are not responsive to contemporary needs. Paradoxically, even if we want to apply our new values in today's world, there is little or no opportunity because of the way the major systems for education, government, and employment are presently structured.

5. The Shift In The Skills We Need

Since a service society reflects a new value for life, new skills will be needed to help enhance the quality of life. In the industrial age, needed skills were leadership abilities, negotiating techniques, aggressiveness,

decisiveness, ruthlessness—qualities stereotypically identified with men. In the service society, however, we are going to be playing different roles, and, as already indicated, sharing roles. We cannot, then, think of leadership, for example, as a male prerogative. Many of this new society's important values—sharing, compassion, tenderness—have been transmitted culturally as "female" values. Where effective service to co-citizens has become the ideal, competent workers will have to learn and use a broad variety of skillful behaviors—those characterized as male and those as female—all of which are learnable by all workers. The service society is pressing us toward broader, more androgynous behaviors that will enable each person to perform effectively in many areas—to be forceful in one situation or tender and caring in another, depending on what is called for. Choices such as these have rarely been recognized as important either as values for work or as major topics within the context of an educational model for the service society.

THE NATURE OF WORK IN THE SERVICE SOCIETY

The work most people do bears little relationship to the new values we see emerging—and little relationship to our old values. We now know that we must cooperate and share in order to survive. But how can we do this unless our lives are imbued with the values of cooperating and sharing? Schools support competition and aggression. They rarely encourage study that is cooperative or concern themselves with other people's growth or well-being. Ironically, even the competition we do foster in schools has no outlet in work either within the service sector or within the production sector. The assembly line, for example, so crucial to production, has demanded robot-like behavior. In its purest traditional form it does not encourage either competition or the new value of cooperation. It is this robot-like labor that people want to get away from. They want meaningful work.

Author Barbara Garson spent three years traveling around the country to gain people's perspectives on their work. In her extensive interviews with assembly line workers, two highlights emerged again and again: 1) the assembly line crushes any sense of individuality, personal satisfaction, or purpose, and 2) people will invent ways, often negative ways, to do work so that they make an impact as individuals. This impulse was reflected in the automobile assembly line workers who scratched shiny new doors or threw ignition keys into gas tanks—destructive actions, but actions that alleviated the impersonality of work.[5]

In *Work in America*, the report of a special federal task force, the problem is stated clearly: "When it is said that work should be 'meaningful' what is meant is that it should contribute to self-esteem, to the sense of fulfillment through the mastering of one's self and one's environment, and to the sense that one is valued by society. The fundamental question is: What

am I doing that really matters?"[6] According to a study cited in the same report, "The potent factors that impinge on the worker's values . . . are those that concern his or her self respect, a chance to perform well in his work, a chance for personal achievement in competence, and a chance to contribute something personal and unique to his work."[7]

To work because work is purposeful, needed, and satisfying is almost impossible at present because few jobs are so structured. To work because work in itself is good—the old work ethic—is no longer appropriate. There is nothing in the present environment and structure of work to support the old ethic, and little, as yet, to support a new one. If, however, work systems were structured to foster collaboration, sharing, working together to produce or design something of value, these new structures would encourage a new ethic based on the emerging values in our society. Much of the dissonance and dissatisfaction we find among people is caused by the clash of old values and outmoded systems of work with new values and new systems of work. A rational work ethic cannot be taught when the values which permeate teaching are in disharmony with reality.

Perhaps nothing argues more persuasively for the importance of developing a new kind of education than the present state of the service provided by such agencies as schools, hospitals, and mental health centers. Service is especially valuable work. It should be rewarding, and it should express the values emerging in our changing society. What we have now, however, is vastly different from what we desire—humane, competent service.

On one side we have a civil service system which rewards endurance rather than excellence. Its method of promoting people, based on mass testing, relates neither to actual human needs nor to effective service delivery. Overall, the system has become better at sustaining the provider of service than the person who receives services. Alongside the civil service system are the traditional professions, each self-defined to set it apart from the others, most designed as if the persons to be served were agglomerations of glued together sections rather than synergistic wholes. Those who make serious efforts to change rigid practices and patterns from within their profession must expend considerable energy just fighting for needed changes, since what is past is most definitely prologue.

Outside of these existing systems, however, whole areas of services have emerged and in the last twenty years increased greatly in size and importance. These areas include agency-delivered services in such fields as geriatrics, drug rehabilitation, mental health, early childhood education, and legal aid for the poor, to name a few. In addition, there are the vast, growing, and changing areas of business services, where new technologies are being

applied in marketing, communications, sales, personnel, and many other people-oriented specializations. All of these are service areas which have not yet metamorphosed into rigid structural systems. They are still flexible and open to new ideas, including new methods of organization, as well as new educational designs for training the people who deliver services.[8]

If we are serious about effecting change in our service systems and reorganizing our service society, then we are going to have to bring together the people interested in the services mentioned above and unite them in support of a new consumer-oriented professional before these services too are captured and rendered rigid and immobile by the traditional professions. We have the opportunity to create this new professional, the Human Service professional, without being restricted to existing molds. In developing a new kind of professional, we need not be bound by traditional constraints.

We can and must provide the new Human Service professionals with an operating value base against which they will continually judge their work and against which they will in turn be judged. As now envisioned, these new Human Service professionals are not chiefs but cooperators with the citizen and with all other directly involved parties. Human Service professionals will be judged not just by other practitioners but by the citizens or consumers whom they serve. Consumers of service will have status with the new professionals. Everyone, and not just professionals, will know the ground rules, so that citizens are not dependents but equal participants. Because the professional and the citizen will work together to decide on the goals to be reached, and because the citizen as well as the professional will judge the service, Human Service professionals should by the nature of their work be restrained from steady fossilization.

In the private sector, a parallel effort to develop responsible service professionals is needed. Professional practice, whether in the private or the public and non-profit sectors, must be closely tied to professional education. Education and the professions should continuously interact with each other rather than occur in sequence like rungs on a ladder. It may be easier to bring change to the private sector than the public sector to the extent that it will not be necessary to fight entrenched professions and rigid Civil Service codes. Furthermore, the private sector has an additional incentive to provide service of quality, in that profit and loss are involved.

How will the new Human Service professionals come into being? What is their purpose? What are their goals and methods? What will their practitioners do and how will they do it? in short, what does the new model of professionalism look like?

EMERGENCE OF A NEW APPROACH TO SERVICE

A number of practitioners, educators, and theorists are now working to bring the new professional into being. These individuals come from institutions of higher education, service agencies, and future-oriented associations. Their institutions run the gamut from the small experimental college to the large, traditional institution, and from the small community agency to divisions of state governments. At this point, the impetus for a new approach is coming chiefly from those concerned with the services delivered by public and private agencies, including schools, hospitals, and community service agencies. These persons form the nucleus of the group that will give the new approach to service form, content, and clout.

The immediate purpose of the new agency professional is to provide a range of human services to the individual, thereby eliminating indifferent and fragmented service; to help the individual seeking service to reach a stage where he or she no longer needs that service; or better still, to help the individual become sophisticated and knowledgeable enough to negotiate the system and thus able to provide his or her own service in the future. A long-range purpose of the Human Service professional is to encourage the establishment of a service-oriented society—a society in which caring for people is rewarding to both the giver and the receiver of service, in terms of both the quality of life and the meaningfulness of work.

WHAT THE NEW SERVICE PROFESSIONALS WILL LOOK LIKE

What will the Human Service professionals look like? What will they do that is different? Will their skills be different? Their objectives? Their methods? Their goals? Can the new professionals really avoid fragmenting service and frustrating the citizen? Will they really be any more caring than the traditional giver of service?

The answer is yes. We are going to prepare professionals who are capable of serving, advocating for, and helping the whole person. We will prepare such persons through methods involving intellectual and operating practices that will pattern future professional behavior. Moreover, professional preparation will take place in a setting where accountability is both an objective and a process.

The new Human Service professional will acquire the important generic skills which must be practiced in any and all areas where service is the goal. These skills will allow the new professional to cross institutional lines, areas of specialization, and disciplines. These generic skills, or what I call "Crystals" of ability, are essential if we want to provide service to the whole person and not just pieces of the person.

What are these generic Crystals that will identify the Human Service professional? They are, in brief, the ability to establish fruitful professional relationships with co-workers and citizens in any setting; the ability to work with people in groups, helping them define their common purpose and work together to achieve it; the ability to teach and communicate in the sense of finding and effectively conveying needed information; the ability to counsel people in ways that promote their growth rather than paternalistically foisting actions on them; the ability to reach out and work with the community; the ability to supervise; and the ability to work for change where it is recognized that significant institutional change is part of the solution.

These generic abilities will, themselves, be shaped by the same five Dimensions which are shaping our society. The interaction of these five Dimensions and the eight Crystals will provide the framework for applicable theory. A visual presentation of how the Dimensions and the Crystals interact is in the Appendix.

As demonstrated earlier, the five Dimensions are pervasive. Our society is experiencing a shift in *purpose,* from production to service; a shift in *values,* from caring about quantities of goods to caring about the quality of life; a shift in our understanding of *ourselves and others,* from a sharp division in our concepts of male and female roles to a blending of these roles, from a belief in the absolute autonomy of biological systems to an acknowledgement of the control which we can exert over these systems; a shift in our *systems* and how we see them, from acceptance of the autocratic depersonalization of work to a strong concern that work provide us with a sense of self-satisfaction, and from the rigidity of the civil service system and traditional managerial hierarchies to systems that respect and value our capabilities; and lastly, a shift in our *skills,* from the skills required of the industrial age to those needed in a service age.

The five Dimensions will serve as guidelines for working with people. They will require one, as a Human Service professional, to continually question and clarify one's purposes; one's understanding of the values at work in any situation, i.e,. one's own values and ethical beliefs, the citizen's, and the society's (all three may be at variance); one's understanding of the various systems working for and against the citizen, the agency, and oneself; and one's knowledge and use of the skills that will be effective in the given situation. These five Dimensions are like filters through which one can measure and view any and all of life's activities. They are yardsticks against which professional activity can and should be examined and evaluated. They are tools which the Human Service professional tries to transmit to the citizen so that the latter can be empowered toward self-help.

How will the new Human Service professional acquire these essential generic Crystals of ability and the skill to use these important and special Dimensions that help shape and analyze professional behavior? How will the new Human Service professional come to behave in a fashion that not only accommodates but welcomes the citizen in a role as partner, as evaluator of the service he or she receives, as pursuer of self-empowerment?

The achievement of the Crystals and Dimensions of effective performance will, I believe, come about through a new learning paradigm and a new assessment tool.

AN EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM FOR THE SERVICE SOCIETY

Until now, knowledge has not been organized to encourage its practical application in human service practice and performance. We study literature, psychology, sociology, economics, political science, anthropology, etc. as separate entities and rarely, if ever, consider how elements from each might come together to influence practice in a particular human service situation.

The new professional, in contrast, will be prepared through an overarching design of education which pulls from constituted disciplines and bodies of knowledge material that can be reorganized and focused toward practice. Knowledge, after all, is not gained to be understood in limbo. What is the point of knowledge in human service, one may rightfully ask, if it is not understood in the context of one's work and reformulated to serve the citizen, to the satisfaction of the citizen, the professional, and the professional supervisor? What is the point of revering the "liberal arts" if the liberal arts have no real impact in our lives? The new paradigm of learning restores the liberal arts to prominence, for it postulates that if the liberal arts are concerned with the core of our humanity, if they broaden our awareness, they ought to have meaning in our lives. An education that looks for this significance—that can show us the usefulness of particular ideas and draw the connection between those ideas and real life—can make the practitioner accountable for developing professional performance grounded in the actual blending of theory and practice.

Under a design that seeks illumination from all knowledge, we then approach traditional disciplines from a new perspective. This perspective begins and ends with purpose. In the case of the Human Services, the overarching definition of purpose has to do with improving the human condition. With purpose as a focus, the Human Service professional now searches for relevant knowledge and techniques. He or she conducts this search from the perspective of the five Dimensions, asking: What theory may help us clarify and achieve our goals . . . enlighten us about the ethical

issues and value judgments we are faced with . . . give us insight into ourselves and our relations with others . . . help us make better use of systems . . . and lead us toward application of new skills?

I believe that before Human Service professionals are credentialed, they must be required to demonstrate that indeed they have understood theory, that they can explain what particular aspects of theory persuaded them to take certain actions rather than others, and that they can describe how this knowledge specifically helped them bring changes in the citizen's situation.

This ability to make use of theory to achieve significant results can be shown through the assessment of the would-be professional's actual performance using . . .

A NEW ASSESSMENT TOOL: THE CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION

The Constructive Action is a method for pulling theory and practice together, for joining the education site to the worksite. This coalescence will mean a new relationship between the educational institution and the operating human service agency or business—a cross pollination which ties them together and enriches both work and education.

A Constructive Action is many things. It is a major piece of service delivery. It is designed to improve the life of citizens. It is conceived with the help of the citizen it serves. It can be carried out almost anywhere, in a profusion of settings—nursing homes, profit and non-profit hospitals, schools, halfway houses, banks, personnel offices. The Constructive Action is that complex process through which we will ensure that only those who are competent in both practice and theory in all of the Crystals we have enumerated as essential will be credentialed as Human Service professionals.

Who is involved in this Constructive Action? What exactly is it, and how does it actually work?

Participating in the Constructive Action are the professional-in-training (the student), the citizen, the teacher, and one or more staff members of the service delivery organization. Throughout, the Constructive Action is a collaborative effort among the citizen, faculty, student, and agency or agencies involved. Its objective is to serve the citizen, the professional in training, and the organization. This means that the citizen must recognize that he or she has been helped, the student practitioner must demonstrate competence in helping the citizen, and the agency must be satisfied that a human problem has been moved closer to resolution.

A Constructive Action might involve helping an individual to become or remain economically self-supporting, or protecting a child from abuse, neglect, or exploitation, or working with a community trying to turn

back decay, or helping an insurance company respond more quickly to customer emergencies, or preventing or undoing the effects of inappropriate institutional care on a person with developmental disabilities by helping them to obtain service at home or in a group residence.

The Constructive Action, used as the basis for both learning and assessment, sets up a process which will serve the practitioner well throughout his or her working life. It helps to produce a practitioner who is always a learner, always searching for useful theory, measuring performance against the Dimensions as he or she struggles to empower the citizen, to enable the citizen to grow and become better able to deal with the problems of life, family, and community. If one learns to think and operate in this comprehensive way, one can turn all one's work into Constructive Actions.

A specific example will do more than any amount of explanation to show what a Constructive Action is and how it works for the benefit of each of the participants.

ONE STUDENT'S CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION

What follows is a specific example of a Constructive Action. In this example, our prospective Human Service professional was trying to help the parent of a five-year old girl who had been labeled as retarded by her kindergarten teacher. The mother was extremely worried about what was going to happen to her child. She questioned the teacher's diagnosis, and yet she was hesitant to raise her questions with school personnel. An extremely retiring person, making her home in a decaying building, dependent on welfare, unemployed and unskilled, the mother did not appear to be capable of acting to improve anything in her own life or the child's. Once the purpose of the Constructive Action was clarified, it became a mutual effort to build an environment in which the mother could become more effective and could deal realistically with both her needs and the needs of her child. Let us now trace this process.

When the Human Service professional entered this situation, the classroom teacher had written off the child as incapable of learning in a normal setting. The teacher had scant time for the mother, being concerned primarily with the fact that the child did not fit in with the other kindergartners. Once she had concluded that the child was retarded, the teacher so informed the mother and apparently felt that her professional responsibility to this family had been fulfilled.

The mother visited the agency anxious to talk to someone about her child. She was told to speak with the Human Service professional-in-training who had been given responsibility for addressing this family's spectrum of needs. The student-practitioner was able to act in this situation because her concept of service did not allow her to draw neat lines boxing out any of the problem areas that affected this family.

After a few meetings with the mother, the student was well aware of the complexity of the situation. However, as a Human Service professional in training, she had a process to follow—the Constructive Action process. This required her to work thoughtfully and systematically, alternately gathering information, planning, acting, and reflecting. At appointments with the mother, the student-practitioner moved the process forward by constantly eliciting the mother's help in clarifying the goals of their work and deciding on actions, as well as by recognizing any progress that had been made and calling attention to lessons learned. The parent and the student professional talked about the changes they would like to see, what they might realistically accomplish together, and how to go about it. The Constructive Action offered a process, constantly guided by the Dimensions of effective performance, for developing and carrying out a plan for effecting positive change in the lives of this mother and child. Clearly the *purpose* of the Constructive Action was to help both the mother and the child become more effective and self-confident.

The mother, finding in the Human Service professional-in-training a person who took her problems seriously, began to share her anxieties and talk about herself, her child, and her hopes for a better life. Recognizing that being a good mother was a critical *value* for this anxious woman, the human service professional showed the mother ways that she could work with her daughter to improve the child's motor skills and build her pride and pleasure in doing simple kindergarten tasks. The student professional also showed the mother some simple ways of testing the child's developmental skills.

In working with the child, the mother became more confident of her own abilities as a parent. She began to believe that she might live up to her own ideal of motherhood. At the same time, she was gaining a better understanding of *self and others.* By now, she was beginning to recognize that her child was not as advanced as other children of her age. The student practitioner helped the mother gain a deeper understanding of her child and her own feelings about the child. They talked about the child's potential, about her strong points, and about ways of helping her to make the most of her abilities.

When the mother was ready to face the reality that her daughter would need special help, the Human Service student practitioner began to encourage her to work with available *systems.* The practitioner arranged for the child to be tested. Although the tests showed the child to be on the slow side developmentally, she was not found to be retarded. The student had already investigated some of the resources that might be available to help this child.

Now the student practitioner began to introduce the mother to some of the available resources, teaching her with discussion and role plays the *skills* she needed to ask for help and advocate for her child. She was encouraged to act on her own behalf and stand up for herself. Meanwhile, the Human Service professional-in-training worked with the mother and the child to strengthen the child's motor coordination and language skills through special exercises both in the school and the home. As the mother began to see changes in her child, she began to believe that she might after all have the ability to make other changes in her own and her child's life.

Working with the Human Service professional-in-training, the young mother became more aware of herself as a person with her own values and her own human potential. She became aware of her rights as a parent and of her child's rights. She began to think more seriously about the possibility of finding a job, and even of finding a job in an area of real interest to her. At her request, she was referred to a program that would help her begin to learn a skill with which she could earn a living. She was put into contact with agencies and people who could help both the child and her. Tentatively at first, she began to make decisions on her own as to what kind of help she wanted and which agencies she preferred to work with.

Even as the mother reached out to other sources, she returned to the Human Service professional-in-training to discuss the actions they both were taking. Instead of being shunted from one agency to another, the mother was able to maintain a continuing relationship with one individual with whom she could review the interacting events and problems of her life. The Human Service professional-in-training saw herself as helper, manager, cohort, theorist, planner, and advocate. The mother, with the Human Service practitioner's help, began to see herself in these same empowering roles.

In the process of the Constructive Action, the Human Service professional-in-training was learning to ask the right questions of both herself and the citizen. Equally important, the citizen was learning to ask the right questions not only of the Human Service practitioner but of the agencies she began to come in contact with.

Throughout the Constructive Action process, the student met at least once a week with her supervisor at the agency for approval of the overall direction of her work, feedback on actions taken, and advice on next steps. Two full days of the student's week were spent in classes devoted to the Counseling Crystal. In these classes, the student examined key theories that could help her understand the difficult, real life issues she faced concerning conflicting views as to the *purpose* of counseling, the conflicting *values* and ethical standpoints of participants in the counseling process, ways of

understanding *self and others* and the relationships between people, the various *systems* that she, the mother, and the child had to deal with, and the *skills* that could make her a more effective counselor. In all of these classes, the student was able to raise questions that were concerning her and discuss them with other students and with the expert practitioner who led each class. One of her classes was specifically designed to help student-practitioners plan and carry out their Constructive Actions for the Counseling Crystal. Here, students could discuss the triumphs and frustrations they were experiencing in their Constructive Actions, brainstorm, critique theoretical approaches, and observe how themes from their Dimension classes cut through all their work, no matter how different their work settings and the citizens they were working with.

These college classes helped the student professional to examine her service sharply and continuously in terms of the Dimensions. None of what was accomplished came about by chance or merely through the interest of one sympathetic human being in another. From the Human Service professional's point of view, it was the result of a carefully planned Constructive Action which required a particular and constant process of probing, a thinking through of alternatives which could help the citizens, of learning about systems in the community that could work for the citizen, of valuing the citizen's attitudes, of helping mother and child develop new skills, and of learning about the skills she, the Human Service professional, could use to help them more effectively.

Guided by the Human Service educational design and her faculty advisor, the professional-in-training put the issues confronting her and the mother in perspective though a series of critical questions that emanated directly from the Dimensions and the generic Crystals.

In dealing with *purpose* she started out by asking: Who am I helping? Primarily the mother? The mother and the daughter? Anyone else? What needs does each of them see? What are their needs as I see them? Does my supervisor have a different view? What factors may help and hinder us in meeting these needs? What goals can we mutually agree on? What strategies could we use to achieve these goals? Which of these strategies are likely to be most effective? What theoretical approaches are going to help us and which should underpin our plan? How will we judge the results?

In relation to *values,* the student-practitioner asked: Do I have values that conflict with any of the citizen's values? Are there areas where I agree with the citizen and disagree with my supervisor? If so, how will I deal with this? Are there some areas in which I think the mother should clarify or modify her values in order to increase her effectiveness and independence? Is it really my right to try to get her to change her values? How can I help

this mother work with values of the school and other agencies she has to deal with—values which are so very different from hers? Which of the readings in history and philosophy from my Values class have helped me to understand the values of the mother, the teacher, and other participants and to recognize and deal with all of these issues of values and ethics?

In relation to understanding *self and others,* the student asked: What are the special counseling needs of this family? What do I need to know about the factors that have affected the development of this mother and her child? Are there explanations of the child's slow development that I have not thought of? How have the growth and potential of mother and child been judged by others, and what effects have such assessments probably had on these two people? What experience have I had with situations like those the mother is facing, and how has this influenced my outlook? Among the various counseling approaches we have learned about in Self and Others class, which would be most appropriate in this case? How does this approach relate to my needs, their needs, and the resources available to both of us? What am I doing to help the mother develop a better understanding of herself and others in order to increase her effectiveness and independence?

In terms of *systems:* What kind of learning environment does my agency represent? What resources does it provide? Am I making full use of the resources available? What limits does the agency impose on the kind of help I can give this family? Will I be able to accomplish more if I have a better understanding of the formal and informal organization of my agency? What other systems are this mother and child involved with? Are the effects of these systems positive or negative? How can I make these systems work for the family? How can I help the mother to make use of them?

In terms of *skills,* how shall these citizens develop problem-solving skills? How do we work together to establish objectives, plan and carry out strategies, and assess the results? How do I work with them to evaluate their growth and my effectiveness? How can I help develop the citizens' ability to assess the service they receive? What are my methods for creating and maintaining a positive learning environment? How do I help citizens develop the interpersonal skills they need? What methods do I use to find appropriate resources? Do these methods work for me? Would some of them be useful to the citizens I am working with? How effective are my communication skills? What are my methods for transmitting information?

If true improvement is to take place, the reviewers of service have to be aware that something happened to them in the very Dimensions that affect the professional's performance. The citizens should know whether the purpose of service has been met, whether there is greater clarity and

conviction as to values, whether systems have been responsive, what skills have been learned. In other words, if I am the citizen, I should be able to say "this is what has happened to me because of the service you have rendered."

All of this and more is recorded in the process of the Constructive Action. All plans, events, observations, and results are described and analyzed in logs which can then be reviewed and discussed with the Crystal Class instructor.

It is obvious that solving human problems is a complex process for both the professional and the citizen. In a way, it can be as intricate as building a bridge, for the elements must mesh if success is to result. In Human Service, it is not possible to do this kind of building unless we provide a "human service theory" or method equivalent to the methods of science. In the Constructive Action process, I believe we have such a method.

Just as Freud, Piaget, and Montessori, for example, based their formulations on extensive actual observation and practice, students and professionals under the new model will have expanded opportunities to learn from actual experience, to test academic material in real situations, and to produce major breakthroughs in human service practice. In all these instances, performance amounts to a combination of overt behavior and an awareness of the theoretical base for that behavior, as well as sensitivity to the consequences and their implications for future practice.

There will emerge from this new service orientation, it is to be hoped, a more rational process for the development of jobs to meet citizens' service needs. The formulation of job descriptions which embody the new worker role and reflect desired new service approaches and staffing patterns is a major and continuing task for Human Service professionals. If such formulations were shared, they could be used to relate the particular vision of one agency to a broader effort to build and define new kinds of professional service positions.

With all the tremendous changes that are taking place in America, our schools and colleges have not substantially redirected their goals. They are not preparing us for a service society, or helping us to see the consumer as an integral part of the education and assessment process. They have not adopted, as one of education's goals, the empowerment of citizens/consumers to deal with their problems. They have not addressed themselves directly to the requirements of our service society, or to the opportunities for effective job performance and meaningful employment.

This paradigm does.

NOTES

1. See Fuchs, Victor R., *The Service Economy,* National Bureau of Economic Research, New York, 1968. Pages 1, 11, 18, 32, 34 among others.

2. Other writers have characterized this society in various ways. See Daniel Bell, *The Coming of the Post Industrial Society,* for a discussion of a future in which institutions of higher education and technocrats who run and work in them attain ever greater amounts of power because of the special role assigned to knowledge and its development and acquisition. See also Robert Heilbroner, *The Human Prospect,* for a dismal projection of our survival possibilities, let alone our humane capacities. See Arthur Pearl for discussions of how ecological factors will force us into a society of immense services.

3. In "Changes in Higher Education; Two Possible Futures," a paper presented at the American Council of Education Conference in Washington on October 9 and 10, 1975, Aldo Visalberghi, Professor of Education at the University of Rome, outlined a possible model of egalitarian society where the relationship between work and postsecondary education is strong and constant and where, as a result, there can be institutionalized "vertical rotation of labor." This model presupposes a great number of generic competencies that would be developed throughout the entire population. This would facilitate a rotation of labor system and the emergence of a nearly classless society.

4. *Work in America,* report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, M.I.T. Press, 1974. The examples detailed include a new General Foods plant design, the redesign of work tasks at Bankers Trust and the restructuring of an assembly operation at Motorola.

5. Garson, Barbara, *All the Livelong Day: The Meaning and Demeaning of Routine Work,* Doubleday and Company, Garden City, New York, 1975.

6. *Work in America,* op. cit., p. 5. The quotation is cited from Robert Coles' "On the Meaning of Work," 1971.

7. *Ibid.,* p. 31.

8. These service areas are what I and many others have come to call the Human Services. They include all of those areas which are heavily dependent on human relations and whose primary goal is not the production of a product but rather the production of a change, in people (medicine, advertising) or in their belongings (transportation, maintenance).

APPENDIX

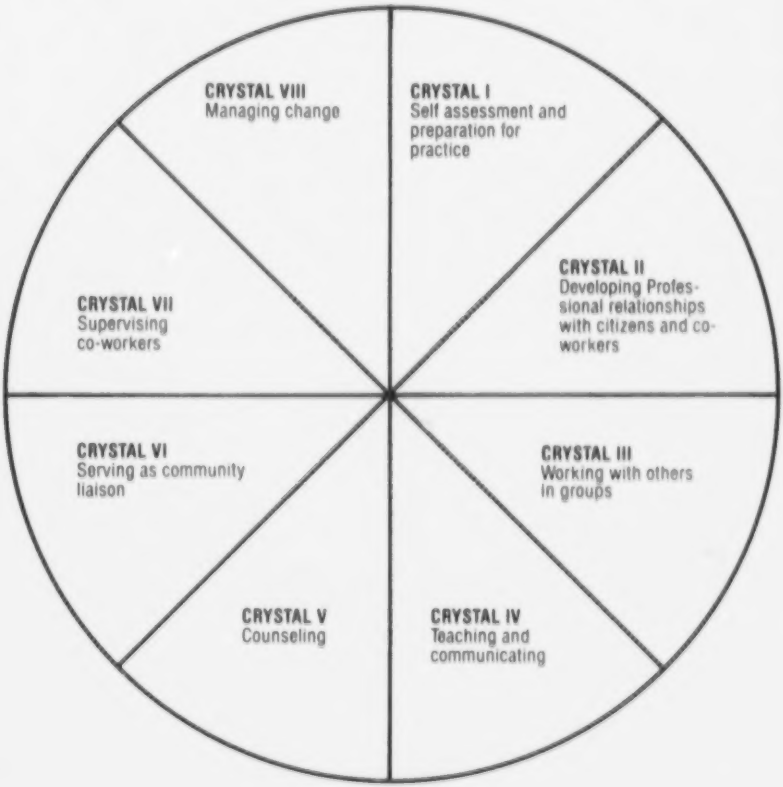
AN OUTLINE OF THE COLLEGE FOR HUMAN SERVICES EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The charts on the following pages outline the conceptual framework for the College for Human Services educational system and show how this conceptual framework guides educators as they develop a complete, integrated, transdisciplinary curriculum. The curriculum whose development we follow in these charts represents a baccalaureate program for service professionals in agency settings. The system has been used to develop programs at all levels from primary and secondary school to graduate studies. It has shaped programs for professionals in business as well as the not-for-profit world.

CRYSTALS

Human service professionals must know how to be effective in eight separate performance areas.

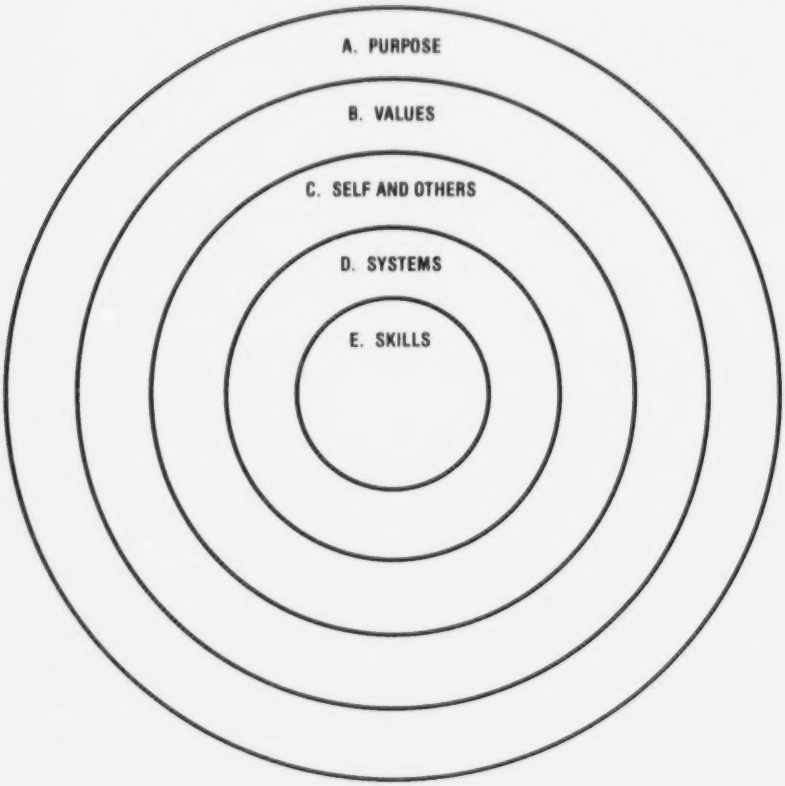
Our students become effective in these performance areas by progressing through eight self-contained Crystals of learning.



DIMENSIONS

Effective professionals are always aware of five Dimensions of their performance.

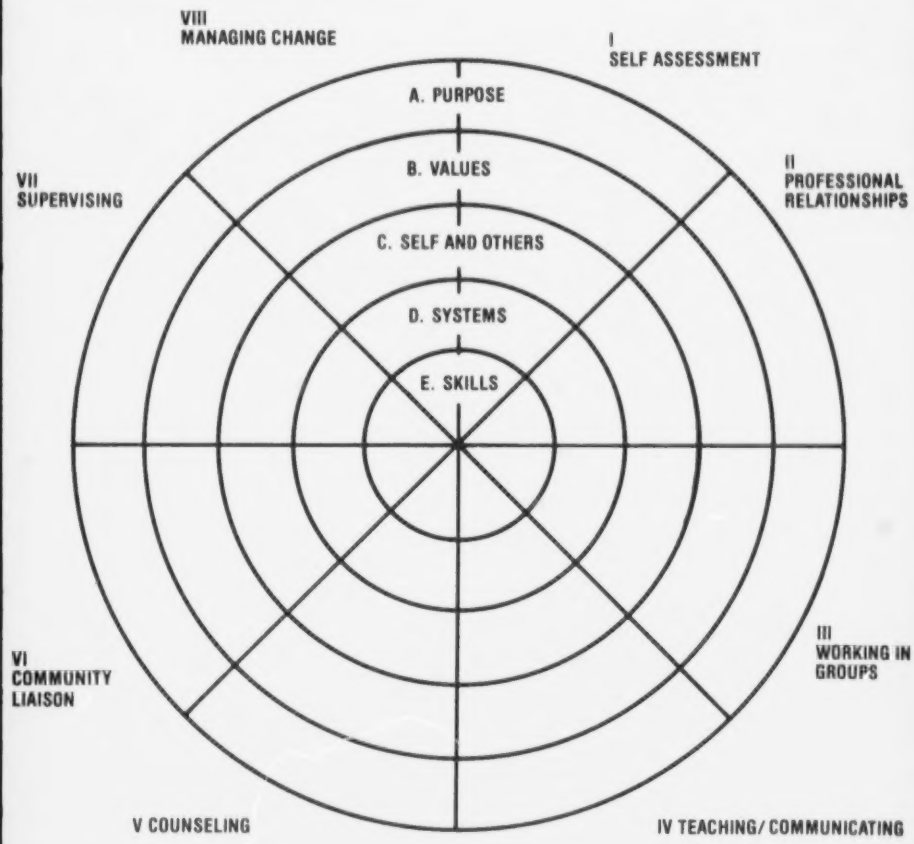
Our students focus on these Dimensions of performance in five separate Dimension classes.



PRISM

The eight Crystals and the five Dimensions combine to form a curriculum model that is like a many-faceted Prism.

The Prism encompasses all that competent professionals must know and do. It draws knowledge and skills from all the disciplines: *philosophy, history, law* (Values Dimension); *psychology, biology, anthopology, literature* (Self and Others Dimension);*economics, political science, sociology* (Systems Dimension); *research, communication, interpersonal skills* (Skills Dimension); *planning, management, evaluation* (Purpose Dimension).



CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIONS

A detailed look at the Prism shows that the curriculum is organized to help students perform Constructive Actions in the real world.

▼ The 8 Crystals provide the focus for 8 Constructive Actions.

The 5 Dimensions provide guidelines for the Constructive Actions. ▼	**CRYSTAL I SELF ASSESSMENT**	**CRYSTAL II PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**	**CRYSTAL III WORKING IN GROUPS**
Dimension A PURPOSE	Assessment of strengths and learning needs; beginning preparation for professional practice.	Developing professional relationships at the worksite with clients and co-workers.	Working with people in groups, helping to establish clear goals and achieve optimum results.
Dimension B VALUES	Values of the human service profession.	Values and ethical codes of the professions.	Values and ethical issues in group membership.
Dimension C SELF AND OTHERS	Understanding the needs and interests of the professional-in-training.	Understanding people in terms of their developmental stage.	Understanding people as members of groups.
Dimension D SYSTEMS	Resources for professional development.	The nature of human service organizations.	Groups as systems and components of larger systems.
Dimension E SKILLS	Skills for professional development.	Skills for establishing professional relationships.	Skills of group membership and leadership.

In every Crystal, students spend part of each week at a field site. The Constructive Action they perform at their field site synthesizes their classroom studies and their field experience in a significant effort to improve service.

CRYSTAL IV TEACHING AND COMMUNICATING	CRYSTAL V COUNSELING	CRYSTAL VI COMMUNITY LIAISON	CRYSTAL VII SUPERVISION	CRYSTAL VIII MANAGING CHANGE
Helping people define and achieve appropriate learning and information goals.	Helping people to make choices in ways that promote their growth and independence.	Helping individuals and groups in the community to identify community needs and obtain services that meet those needs.	Teaching and enabling co-workers to work effectively for the empowerment of citizens.	Planning, researching, and promoting programs to improve service.
Values and ethical issues in teaching and communication.	Values and ethical issues in counseling.	Values and ethical issues in work with communities.	Values and ethical issues in supervision.	Values and ethical issues in planned and unplanned change.
Understanding people as learners.	Understanding people's emotional development.	Understanding the needs and concerns of communities.	Understanding people as supervisors and as supervisees.	Understanding people in situations of change.
Learning and communication systems	Counseling systems.	Communities as systems and as parts of larger systems.	Supervisory systems.	Systemic resources for change; systemic responses to change.
Skills of teaching and communication.	Counseling skills.	Skills of community liaison.	Supervisory skills.	Skills of change management.

BLENDING THEORY AND PRACTICE

In developing one Crystal's curriculum, faculty identify the key issues that students will need to address in their Constructive Actions.

Dimension A **PURPOSE**	Who are the co-workers to be supervised? What is the purpose of the project which will be carried out under the student's supervision? How will the student's work as a supervisor contribute to the empowerment and productivity of the organization's constituencies, including staff, citizens, and community?
Dimension B **VALUES**	What is the philosophical basis for the organization's legitimacy? What is the impact of organization biases on management decisions? How does the organization deal with value differences within the organization? Within the community? What is the impact on service of value diversity in the organization and the community? How can this diversity best be accomodated?
Dimension C **SELF AND OTHERS**	What resources of knowledge, skills, attitudes, aspiration, etc. do staff bring to this project? How can the supervisor help staff members achieve productivity for the organization and growth as professionals? What leadership style is most appropriate? How can conflicts be resolved?
Dimension D **SYSTEMS**	What management systems does the organization use to analyze organizational performance and planning? What are the organization's information and control systems? How can these systems be utilized for greatest effectiveness? What are the role and responsibilities of management? How can the organization's commitment to empowerment be strengthened?
Dimension E **SKILLS**	What constituencies have an interest in the organization's financial picture? What accounting methods does the organization use? How are these accounting methods used for control? For decision making? How does the supervisor make use of the organization's accounting system? How does it impact on the supervisor's work?

Next, faculty identify the disciplines they will draw on, the theory they will present, and the specific readings they will assign to help students blend theory and practice in their Constructive Actions.

Readings selected by students for relevance to their individual Constructive Actions.

Postema, *Bentham And The Common Law*
Jefferson, Madison, Jay, *The Federalist Papers*
Weber, *The Theory of Economic and Social Organization*
Etzioni, *Modern Organizations*
Argyris, "Being Human and Being Organized."
Keefe, "The Economic Context of Empathy."
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Wards Cove Packing v. Antonio
Martin v. Wilks

Timm, *Supervision*
Davis and Newstrom: *Human Behavior at Work*
Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality*
Machiavelli, *The Prince*
Kanter, *The Change Masters*
Pattern, *A Manager's Guide to Performance Appraisal*
Fisher and Uri, *Getting To Yes.*

Rivlin, *Systematic Thinking For Social Action*
Cleland and King, *Systems Analysis and Project Management*
Tricker and Boland, *Management Information*
Raia, *Managing By Objectives*
U.S. Comptroller General, *Standards For Audit of Governmental Organizations, Programs, Activities, And Functions*

Henke, *Introduction To Nonprofit Organization Accounting*
Gambino and Reardon, *Financial Planning and Evaluation For The Nonprofit Organization*
Vinter, *Budgeting For Not-for-Profit Organizations*
Pound, "Userer," from "Canto XLV"
Rice, *The Adding Machine*

INTEGRATION

As the final step in curriculum planning, faculty map out, week by week, the integration of academic subject matter with the steps in planning and carrying out the Constructive Action. The example is from the Supervision Crystal.

	WEEK 1	WEEK 3	WEEK 5
PURPOSE	Review opportunities at the internship to promote citizen empowerment and organizational productivity as the supervisor of one or more service providers.	Negotiate agreement with supervisor and professor on the project to be focused on and the service providers to be involved. Begin to explore relevant literature.	Develop a plan of action with supervisees: Agree on goals for citizen empowerment and goals for empowerment of supervisees; clarify how goal achievement will contribute to agency productivity; plan strategies, budget, management controls.
	Begin logs----------	----------	----------Write Plan of Action------
VALUES	Historical foundations: Comparative views of the justification for organizations (Postema, Jefferson, Madison)	Comparative views of the justification for management controls (Neugeboren)	Contrasting social, economic, and political interpretations of organizational effectiveness (Weber, Taylor, Hummel, Gulick and Urwich)
SELF AND OTHERS	The nature of supervisory relationships (Etzioni, Timm)	Motivation and behavior in the workplace (Davis and Newstrom)	Building effective supervisory relationships (Likert, Machiavelli)
SYSTEMS	Systematic thinking for social action (Rivlin)	Systems approaches to management (Cleland)	Systems analysis (Cleland, Brady, Raia)
SKILLS	Management's financial responsibilities, Comparison of accounting methods (Henke, Gambino)	Reading financial statements (Haller, Gambino)	Setting up and keeping books (Henke, Rice)

WEEK 8	WEEK 10	WEEK 12
Carry out Plan of Action. Hold staff meetings and supervisory conferences as appropriate. Use management controls to monitor progress of work and make adjustments as needed. Continue to research relevant literature and explore supervisory resources.	Meet with supervisees to assess achievement of goals and success of strategies. Were the goals relevant? Was the project worthwhile? Evaluate performance of supervisees; have supervisees evaluate supervisor performance.	Meet with student's own supervisor and with professor to discuss outcome of the Constructive Action and their evaluation of student supervisor's performance. Make plans for follow-up.
------Continue logs. Append supervisory memos, minutes of meetings.	-------Write analysis of Constructive Action	------Revise and edit completed record.
The impact on service of the value differences within organizations (Weber, Taylor, Etzioni)	Accommodating organizational values and practice to the diversity of values in the community (St. Augustine, Rousseau, Civil Rights Act, Supreme Court decisions)	How ethical issues are reflected in professional codes (examples of codes from professions such as social work, law, psychology)
Developing human resources (Ouchi, Pattern)	Working with problems and conflicts (Timm, Fisher and Uri)	
Cost benefit analysis (Sughen, Klarman)	Management information and control systems (Tricker-Boland, Comptroller General)	Project Management (Cleland, King)
Accounting and reporting guidelines (Henke)	Controlling the not-for-profit organization (Vinter, Pound)	Tax and compliance reporting requirements (Henke)